



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

REGISTERED SEX OFFENDER CHARGED IN WEST PALM BEACH

MIAMI- R. Alexander Acosta, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, Michael S. Clemens, Special Agent-in-Charge, United States Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and Jesus Torres, Special Agent-in-Charge, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), announced today that United States Magistrate Judge James M. Hopkins unsealed an eight (8) count federal grand jury indictment charging, Frank Grasso of West Palm Beach, a registered sex offender, with several federal offenses.

In today's initial appearance court hearing, Grasso was ordered detained until his trial in this case. The trial will be conducted by United States District Court Judge Daniel T. K. Hurley.

The indictment charges Grasso with making and publishing a notice and advertisement seeking to receive, exchange, and distribute child pornography, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 2251(d) and 2251(e). Grasso is also charged with three (3) counts of mailing child pornography by computer and three (3) counts of receiving child pornography that had been mailed by computer, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 2252A(a)(1), 2252A(a)(2), and 2252A(b)(1). Count eight (8) of the indictment charges Grasso with possession of child pornography, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 2252A(a)(5)(b) and 2252A(b)(1).

If convicted on all counts, Grasso faces a minimum statutory sentence of twenty-five (25) years' imprisonment, and faces a maximum statutory sentence of three hundred and ten (310) years' imprisonment.

At the time of his arrest, Grasso was serving a fifteen (15) year term of probation imposed by the State of Florida for his 1992 felony convictions for false imprisonment of a minor, lewd and lascivious behavior involving a child under sixteen (16) years of age, and distribution of obscene material. Since his arrest on March 24, 2005, Grasso has been held in the Palm Beach County Jail for violating the terms of that probation.

The investigation into Grasso began when Yahoo!, Inc. provided a tip to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children ("NCMEC") regarding the posting of child pornography by one of its subscribers. NCMEC referred the tip to the FBI, which was able to identify the account responsible for the

posting of the child pornography. The FBI, in conjunction with ICE, identified several Yahoo! "briefcase" and photograph posting-sites used by Grasso to post images of child pornography. The site most recently created by Grasso contained over 1,000 images of naked pre-pubescent boys and invited others to view his photos.

Based upon this information, the FBI, ICE, and the U.S. Attorney's Office contacted the Palm Beach Sheriff's Office and Grasso's probation officer to inform them of the suspected violations. On May 24, 2005, the Probation Office conducted search of Grasso's room, discovered images of child pornography on his computer, and arrested him for violating the terms of his probation.

State and federal search warrants obtained for Grasso's computer equipment and home resulted in the seizure of one computer and more than 150 floppy diskettes. Forensic analysis conducted by the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office Computer Crimes Unit resulted in the discovery that Grasso, who has a degree in Computer Science, had an elaborate system for storing and securing his e-mail and child pornography files. Three (3) hidden hard drives were discovered on Grasso's computer and it is estimated that the computer and floppy diskettes contained more than 4,000 images of child pornography.

Mr. Acosta commended the investigative efforts of the FBI and ICE. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Ann Marie Villafana.

#ICE#

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.